

COMMANDER'S HATCH

The Revolution in Institutional OES-AOB/AC3

by Major General B. B. Bell, Commanding General, U.S. Army Armor Center



Never before in our nation's history have the missions of the Army been as complex, varied, and demanding as they are today. The Army's missions are directly linked to the role our nation is playing in helping shape the international environment where our interests are on the line. While shaping the environment to prevent future conflict, we must also have forces ready to respond to a crisis while ensuring our future systems and formations are prepared to meet future threats and operational environments.

The Mounted Force plays a vital part in each of these missions, which range from being prepared to conduct high-intensity combat operations to conducting stability and support operations around the world. As evidenced by the role of mounted forces in the decade of the '90s, we are the Army's full spectrum relevant force of choice. The stated intent of our Chief of Staff is to provide the *leadership*, grounded in the future, to keep the Army the pre-eminent land warfighting force in the world. The corresponding and central demands placed on the Armor and Cavalry community require us to be prepared to accomplish an increasingly wide variety of tasks to be successful. Inherent in these expectations is for the Armor Center to provide the force with leaders who are disciplined, competent, professional, and tough enough to meet these demands. The Armor Center and School will foster the development of warrior leaders for combined arms mounted warfare, as well as light-heavy operations, across the full spectrum of conflict in all terrain, to include complex and urban. This is easy to say, but tough to do. Nonetheless, we can (and must) produce these adaptive leaders capable of successfully operating across a wide range of asymmetric environments.

Tactical and technical competence and small unit leadership nested in the warrior ethos remain the centerpiece of our officer and noncommissioned officer education systems.

The 16th Cavalry Regiment, which conducts Armor and Cavalry leader training for the Armor Center (less NCOES), is on the hook to produce adaptive warrior/leaders for our officer corps. The primary mission of the 16th Cavalry Regiment is to provide the field with trained officers at platoon through brigade level who are prepared to assume leadership duties in Armor and Cavalry units. For company grade officers, they accomplish this during the Armor Officer Basic Course for lieutenants, and the Armor Captains Career Course (AC3, formerly AOAC) for captains. These courses have undergone significant changes in the past year in an effort to make leap-ahead improvements to our leader training, and to keep pace with the needs of the Mounted Force.

Our field commanders have told us that they want us to enhance the quality of training of our new lieutenants. We've gotten the message, and are committed to providing the force with competent warfighting platoon leaders (with full spectrum skills) prepared to perform required duties upon arrival at their next unit. This is our number one priority — we will start Armor officers off right. Presently, AOB is undergoing a dramatic redesign implementation effort to substantially improve how we do this. A dedicated team was formed in April of this year to re-engineer the course. This effort, which we call AOB 2000, debuts 30 November 1999 with AOB Class 00-02. The AOB 2000 design returns to the principles of

performance-oriented training. Leadership, maintenance, gunnery, and tactical training are progressively integrated throughout the course. Some fundamental (and exciting) improvements in AOB 2000 include:

Leadership training is embedded on a daily basis. Every day is an opportunity to imbue the students with the Army's values and allow them to practice their leadership skills. From accountability formations and inspections in the morning, to student-led PT, to daily risk assessments, to student-led AARs, students are responsible and accountable for much more than attending class. This is important for officers at this stage in their careers, as they undergo the soldierization process of transitioning to Army officers and warfighters.

Tactical training begins in the small group classroom with rock drills, includes considerable time in virtual simulation, and culminates at the end of the course with a 10-day FTX. This process includes 12 days of training on the Close Combat Tactical Trainer (CCTT) to learn basic maneuver skills prior to going to the field. The 10-day FTX represents an aggressive 4-day increase in field time during the course.

Gunnery training begins during the first week of the course with conduct of fire and UCFT, and culminates in the final week of the course with a modified TTVIII. Gunnery training includes an emphasis on basic hands-on tasks, such as TCGST, as well as TWGSS. Gunnery training is reinforced during all practical aspects of tactical training. This represents an increase of one additional day of

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TCPC with TWGSS, and significant increases in UCFT time before live-fire training.

Maintenance training is embedded through the course during tactical and gunnery training. Training to maintain is accomplished by evaluating maintenance tasks each time students work with the tanks. Students will be tested on each step of PMCS, as opposed to the sampling of steps which are tested today.

The changes incorporated into the Armor Captains Career Course over the past year significantly improved the quality of training for company-level mounted leaders. Converting from a 20-week Program of Instruction (POI) in AOAC to an 18-week AC3 POI necessitated prioritizing the tasks we train in order to continue to train to standard. These changes include redesigning the course to balance planning and execution, as well as metering the pace of instruction to allow students to absorb the skills, knowledge, and attributes in the course.

AC3 incorporates the latest doctrine, tactics, techniques, procedures, and technology. Performance-oriented training is integrated throughout the course using CCTT, Janus and BBS simulations. CCTT has been incorporated into 14 days of the instruction period and allows the

student officers to apply concepts with relevant tactical situations during company/team operations training. This is a net increase of six tactical missions at company level. A Janus situational exercise is under development for integration into the course to allow students to visualize and understand the art of command at the company level. The use of BBS and Janus simulations have been expanded to provide the student officer better conditions to execute tasks as part of a battalion- or brigade-level staff. BBS is also the prime vehicle for the seven-day BN/BDE CPX exercise. Realism is added to training during the CPXs by including current or future battalion and brigade commanders in command positions during the exercise. Throughout each phase of AC3, CS/CSS planning is incorporated, both in the classroom and during practical exercises. The course end state remains providing the field with adaptive captains prepared to command, in addition to having the skills necessary to serve as assistant battalion and brigade S3s. These improvements will keep AC3 as one of the premier courses trained here at the Armor Center.

Development of the Mounted Leader Digital Training Course is currently under way, with a pilot course scheduled for the 3rd quarter of FY2000. The objective

of the course is to provide the force with officers who have the base skills necessary to leverage Army Tactical Command and Control System (ATCCS), and Force XXI Battle Command Brigade and Below (FBCB2) to enhance C3I at company through brigade level.

This course conducts performance-oriented digital training for AC3 and Armor Pre-Command Course students. It will initially constitute a three-week follow-on course for AC3 graduates enroute to ATCCS-equipped units. Eventually, this training will be embedded in AC3, and modified for inclusion in APCC as well.

The challenges faced by the Army and the mounted force are immense. However, we are up to the task. The Armor Center remains committed to providing the force with mounted leaders who have the skills, knowledge, and attributes required to meet the demands placed on Armor and Cavalry units throughout the world. We will train adaptive mounted leaders who will be decisive warriors, enlightened in Force XXI precepts, yet grounded in the realities of the deployed Army on mission across the full spectrum of conflict.

Forge the Thunderbolt and Strike First!